



ELK HORN HUNTING GEAR

"PUTTING SUCCESS IN YOUR HUNT"



CALLING IN BULLS EARLY

I typically hunt three states for elk, Oregon followed by Idaho and then for the last four years, Colorado. With my schedule laid out like that, most seasons I will get seven days to hunt here in Oregon, my home state. This doesn't give me the option of waiting until the bulls are "lit up" later in the season during the peak of the rut. But having to hunt and call bulls early hasn't hindered my success at all. For the past eight years in a row, I have killed bulls in the season's first three days. This past season, on public land, we called in three five-point bulls. What many guys don't realize is that a bull is ready for the rut much sooner than a cow is. He knows what the rut feels like, and most importantly for you the caller, what it sounds like. If you create the type of "herd excitement" he has heard during previous ruts, he will come in no matter what stage the rut is in.

Through years of calling during multiple bow seasons in multiple states, I have learned a bull will come in for three reasons. One: Because he is mad. Two: Because he is feeling the urge to breed. Three: Because he is curious.

When I call, regardless of what time of year it is, I fully expect a bull to come in. The bull may not call or respond, but he will come in. Here is my favorite early-season call sequence. As I mentioned, I try to create herd excitement. To do this, I first throw out a lot of cow and calf calls. Secondly, I will throw out a couple of hyper-estrous, "hot cow" calls. The long, whining ones. Then lastly, I will bugle, high to low. I will do each one of these, one right after another. After completing one run-through, I will wait five minutes and do it again. Wait about five more minutes, run through one more time and then spend about 45 minutes in this spot, waiting for the bull. The waiting 45 minutes is crucial, as you must give the bull a chance to travel to you. Heck, he may have been clear across the canyon and it will take some time for him to get over to you. And, since it is early in the season, he might very well come in silent, so have faith! Calling does work.

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Article Published in "Eastman's Bowhunting Journal", Vol. 4 - Issue 18. July/August 2003